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Key Points

- ◆ The NATO Strategic Concept reconfirms the commitment that Article 5 remains fully operative. It also commits the Alliance to the goal of creating conditions for further reductions in nonstrategic nuclear weapons (NSNW). A key issue in making further reductions will be reassuring Allies that doing so can enhance the security of member states, including Central and Eastern European (CEE) Allies.
- ◆ Future NATO NSNW reductions and reassurance can be undertaken if they are carefully orchestrated, which would involve undertaking a set of balanced steps designed to reassure CEE states; continuing to promote opportunities to reset relations with Russia; and making those systems safe, secure, and sustainable.
- ◆ The task for NATO will be to find the right mix of reassurance for Allies and reset with Russia to create the conditions for additional NSNW reductions on the part of both NATO and Russia.

NATO Reassurance and Nuclear Reductions: Creating the Conditions

by Hans Binnendijk and Catherine McArdle Kelleher

The first point in the preface of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Strategic Concept reconfirms the bonds between NATO nations to defend one another under Article 5. This was a response to the requirement by some Central and Eastern European (CEE) states that reassurance of Article 5 remains fully operative. The fourth point in the preface commits NATO to the goal of creating the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons.¹ This includes further reductions of U.S. nonstrategic nuclear weapons (NSNW) deployed in Europe. It also implies mutual reductions and closer cooperative relations with Russia.

In this paper, we undertake an ambitious research effort to examine Article 5 reassurance in creating conditions for further NSNW reductions. This research effort includes a series of interviews with critical leaders in Washington, DC, NATO capitals, and Moscow.²

The task for NATO, we argue, will be to find the right mix of reassurance for the Allies and reset with Russia to create the conditions for additional NSNW reductions on the part of both NATO and Russia. Measures to reassure NATO Allies might be seen by Russia as assertive and requiring Russian military preparation, including maintenance of their NSNW systems. Measures to build confidence with Russia and mutually reduce NSNW systems might be seen by some Allies as weakening Alliance capabilities or resolve and hence undermining Article 5 reassurance.

The Changing Nature of Nuclear Reassurance

Reassurance has been at the core of NSNW deployments in Europe since the mid-1950s. NSNW—ground-, air-, and sea-based—were introduced in Europe to offset what was seen as overwhelming Soviet/Warsaw Pact conventional force superiority, and thus to demonstrate reassurance that Europe would not

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be left defenseless or subject to the dreaded replay of the occupation/liberation cycle of 1940–1945. These weapons were intended to be triggers of escalation. Increasingly after the 1960s, however, they were also a critical part of the politics of Western security and U.S. efforts to control the use and further proliferation of nuclear weapons, even among friends. Allies were expected to participate in the deployment of NSNW through designated delivery systems and hosted bases, with warheads still under strict U.S. control.³ But through NATO institutions such as the Nuclear Planning Group, the Allies were also to play a direct role in the thinking and planning for the possible use of these weapons. By the early 1980s, there was a further transformation: for certain NATO Allies, NSNW deployments represented a subtle, more symbolic notion of American commitment, engagement, and willingness to offset Soviet nuclear and conventional intimidation.

at the heart of the problem lies an identity crisis of NATO

With the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, NSNW appeared to play a less central role, both politically and operationally. The threat of conventional attack against Europe declined significantly as both NATO and Russia cut conventional forces and the Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact dissolved. Through a series of unilateral measures, the United States and Russia retired or destroyed thousands of NSNW—warheads and launchers designed for European missions.

Currently, according to an unofficial estimate by Ian Anthony and Johnny Janssen, the number of NSNW in Europe ranges from 150 to 200, deployed in five countries and delivered by dual capable aircraft (DCA) from many European nations.⁴ Some Allies argue that these NSNW are no longer important to European defense and that it is time for their removal. Other Allies, especially the newer CEE members, still see them as symbolic of the U.S. commitment and, as such, important to the deterrence guarantee under Article 5. At the

heart of the problem lies an identity crisis of NATO. Certain members, in particular the CEE countries, have placed an increasing emphasis on reassurance and Article 5 functions of the Alliance, including the role of the remaining U.S. NSNW. For many other members, while NATO does remain important, there is no clear consensus on NSNW as a means of reassurance.

Reassurance and CEE States

In July 2009, 22 former leaders from CEE states, including Vaclav Havel and Lech Walesa, wrote an open letter to President Barack Obama stating their concern about Russian behavior. Within the Alliance, this contributed to a major debate about the need for reassurance that the Article 5 commitment remained fully valid. The immediate trigger for this concern was Russia's incursion into Georgia and a cyber attack on Estonia, coupled with the Obama administration's reset policy toward Russia and the fear that reset would come at the expense of the security of CEE states. But several other factors were at play, including the Medvedev doctrine⁵ (which intended to lessen the ability of the United States to engage in unilateral action, and, de facto, appeared designed to weaken NATO) and energy cutoffs that affected Ukraine, Belarus, and other parts of CEE. The February 5, 2010, Russian defense doctrine also reiterated language from previous documents by listing NATO geographical expansion and NATO's global projections as a danger to Russia.⁶

As NATO prepared to write its new Strategic Concept in 2010, therefore, there was concern in CEE states that Russia was already in the midst of an assertive campaign to use ambiguous means, such as cyber attacks, energy cutoffs, and local ethnic unrest, to intimidate and even attack its neighbors. Regarding the Alliance, the CEE states in particular were concerned that such measures would not reach the Article 5 threshold or that NATO decisionmaking and response would be too slow to be effective.

There is a clear nuclear element to these demands for reassurance. Senior leaders in the Baltic states, Poland, and

Czech Republic interviewed for this paper expressed, in the main, deep opposition to unilateral NATO nuclear reductions, although the Poles have been vocal in supporting the elimination of NSNW in exchange for matching reductions in Russia.⁷ These leaders highlighted that Russia's NSNW in Europe outnumber U.S. NSNW systems deployed there by some order of magnitude. Russia's conventional force weakness had also led to a Russian "first use" nuclear doctrine, not unlike NATO's Cold War policy of flexible response. They also pointed to Russian military exercises (Lagoda and Zapad) conducted in 2009 near the Baltic states, which ended with a simulated nuclear attack on Poland.⁸ Moreover, when Poland made the decision to host 10 U.S. ground-based interceptors as part of the Bush administration's Third Site missile defense program, Russian officials responded by threatening to target Poland with Russian nuclear systems in Kaliningrad.⁹

Although the views of CEE countries are not monolithic, many CEE officials believe that U.S. nuclear systems in Europe provide them with reassurance in at least two ways: they offset some of the weight of potential Russian nuclear intimidation, and they symbolically represent America's commitment to use the full range of its military strength to defend all of its Allies. The old Cold War notion of NATO deterrence through rapid escalation and the prospect of large-scale use of NSNW are no longer valid. It is, however, once again being replaced for some NATO members by an important symbol of American commitment.

The various components of extended deterrence, including the role of strategic and NSNW, conventional forces, and missile defense, are now open issues in the ongoing NATO Deterrence and Defense Posture Review (DDPR). Although a consensus has yet to emerge, no matter how extended deterrence is dealt with by NATO members, it is different, albeit related to reassurance. If extended deterrence is seen to fail, reassurance will obviously fail as well.

Reassurance Beyond CEE States

Outside of the CEE sphere, there are different allied concerns and reassurance needs. NATO Allies in South-

ern Europe primarily seek reassurance against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and missiles in the Greater Middle East, particularly in Iran. A nuclear-armed Iran, plus the potential for even greater instability in the region, could enhance the risks of further proliferation to Europe's south. This may be of particular concern for the countries that host U.S. NSNW and that might feel greater insecurity if those systems were removed, in addition to losing a perceived special status within NATO that U.S. NSNW convey to these states.

Some NATO Allies in Western Europe take a different view of U.S. NSNW deployments. They see U.S. weapons in Europe as anachronistic, a source of accidental risk, a destabilizing element in popular eyes, and a possible terrorist security risk. During the Bush administration, U.S. NSNW were removed from Greece and the bilateral arrangements with the United States were quietly suspended.¹⁰

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German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle and other senior German officials have publicly advocated withdrawing the remaining NSNW from Germany—a position adopted by the German coalition government in 2009—while accepting that NATO should remain a nuclear alliance. Westerwelle was joined in February 2010 by Foreign Ministers from Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg (Benelux), and Norway¹¹ in a call to discuss nuclear arms control as part of the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Tallinn in April 2010.¹² Certain NATO states, including these five countries, have been pushing to reconsider these issues with an eye toward changing policies. In a June 2010 speech in Berlin, Norwegian Foreign

Minister Jonas Gahr Støre stated that “it would make good sense [for NATO] to find a means of withdrawing all sub-strategic nuclear weapons from Europe and subsequently eliminating them.”¹³

All NATO members agreed in the November 2010 Strategic Concept to work toward further reductions of NSNW. They also agreed that “any further steps must take into account the disparity with the greater Russian stockpiles of short-range nuclear weapons” and that NATO was “committed to maintain, and develop as necessary, appropriate consultations among Allies on these issues.”¹⁴ An April 15, 2011, non-paper signed by 10 Permanent Representatives to NATO (including Germany, the Benelux countries, and Norway) delivered at the Berlin Foreign Ministers’ Meeting also stated that NSNW reductions “should not be pursued unilaterally or be allowed to weaken the transatlantic link.”¹⁵

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The United Kingdom and France have not pressed for removing U.S. NSNW, and France in particular has urged that NATO retain a strong nuclear deterrent posture (in part due to concerns over the possible effect of U.S. NSNW withdrawal on the broader issue of nuclear deterrence and France’s force de frappe).¹⁶

NATO’s Current Position

At the NATO Foreign Ministers meeting in Tallinn, NATO ministers agreed to a five-point formula suggested by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. This

formula sought to meet the concerns of all Allies. The five points are:

- ◆ As long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance.
- ◆ As a nuclear alliance, sharing nuclear risks and responsibilities widely is fundamental.
- ◆ NATO’s broad aim is to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons.
- ◆ Allies must broaden deterrence against the range of 21st-century threats.
- ◆ NATO’s aim should be to seek Russian agreement to increase transparency on NSNW, relocate weapons, and include NSNW in the next round of arms control.¹⁷

The NATO Group of Experts, chaired by Madeline Albright, concluded in May 2010 that “as long as nuclear weapons exist, NATO should continue to maintain secure and reliable nuclear forces, with widely shared responsibilities for deployment and operational support, at the minimum level required by the prevailing security environment.”¹⁸ The NATO Group of Experts also called for a change in NATO declaratory policy and supported further reductions and “possible eventual elimination” of NSNW, although suggesting the retention of some forward-deployed U.S. NSNW on European territory “under current security conditions.”

The NATO Group of Experts’ report and the Tallinn principles became the basis for the Strategic Concept’s nuclear formula, which was agreed by all member states in Lisbon in November 2010, and which “commits NATO to the goal of creating the conditions for a world without nuclear weapons but reconfirms that as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world, NATO will remain a nuclear alliance.”¹⁹ To implement this aspect of the Strategic Concept, NATO has undertaken a DDPR to identify the appropriate mix of nuclear and conventional capabilities. NATO Defense Ministers also agreed, in principle, to establish a new Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

Arms Control Committee. Members have not yet agreed on its task, but the committee is expected to provide arms control and disarmament input to the review and also to offer a forum for consultations among NATO members on nuclear and conventional arms control more generally.

Seven Paths to Reassurance in Article 5

Numerous measures to help reassure CEE and Southern Allies have been taken and more are under consideration. These are discussed and evaluated below. Adopting reassurance measures to create the conditions for further NSNW reductions will involve both the conventional and strategic arena, including a critical role for cooperative measures in European missile defense. The underlying purpose, however, should be creating adequate reassurance to address the perceived challenges and concerns of Allies. All NATO members would nevertheless draw significant confidence and reassurance from a U.S.-Russia arms control agreement that would provide transparency, a clear timetable for NSNW reductions, and a set of reciprocal, verified levels on NSNW. The nature of those reciprocal measures is a key issue now before the Alliance.

This section reviews seven sets of measures designed to enhance confidence in Article 5 and assesses the positive contribution that they might make to create the conditions for further nuclear reductions.

Building Confidence through Operational Success and Declaratory Statements. One of the most important ways to reassure Allies that NATO will meet its Article 5 obligations is a combination of success in current military operations and clear statements of intent regarding Article 5 (backed up by credible preparations, such as an improved early warning, planning, and crisis management capacity discussed below). These two seemingly different points have a common foundation: confidence that the Alliance can and will deliver on its commitments. NATO is currently conducting military operations in Afghanistan (International Security Assistance Force [ISAF]), providing stability deployments in Kosovo, flying air policing operations over the Bal-

tic states, and operating counterpiracy and counterterrorism missions at sea. It recently completed successful missions in Libya and Iraq. Success, however defined, in these missions is critical to the health of the Alliance itself. CEE Allies understand the linkage between current operations and Article 5, which has prompted them to contribute significantly to ISAF.

Success in operations could reassure Allies further if they were coupled with strong statements of intent regarding Article 5. The Alliance has taken a major step to do this. The first substantive point in the new Strategic Concept is that the Alliance “reconfirms the bond between our nations to defend one another against attack, including against new threats to the safety of our citizens.”²⁰ The first Alliance core task in the new concept is collective defense: “NATO members will always assist each other against attack; in accord with Article 5 of the Washington Treaty . . . the commitment remains firm and binding.”²¹ The Alliance should seek every opportunity in summit and ministerial meetings to reconfirm this commitment.

adopting reassurance measures to create the conditions for further NSNW reductions will involve both the conventional and strategic arena

The success of NATO operations in Afghanistan remains uncertain with ongoing debates about level and duration. If those operations end less than successfully, that will raise questions about political will within the Alliance. However, as with the Bosnia conflict more than 15 years ago, the Alliance has demonstrated the ability to adapt to the changing shapes of political consensus.

Enhancing Conventional Plans, Exercises, and Decisionmaking Procedures. As the Strategic Concept was under development, a major concern of CEE Allies was that NATO did not have adequate contingency plans for

defensive operations in their territory. NATO has subsequently taken remedial steps.²² A new contingency plan for the defense of Poland now exists, which has recently been expanded to the Baltic states. These plans should be broad in scope, focusing on not only major tank attacks but also smaller scale incursions and other more ambiguous means of intimidation. Should NATO itself be unable to act, presumably the United States with others might seek a more limited coalition to mount a response. It may therefore also be useful to explore whether U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) should develop its own contingency plans for defending this region.

These Article 5 contingency plans need to be exercised at the usual levels—command-post exercises, tabletop play, simulations adapted to changing circumstances,

although creating contingency plans should not be seen as provocative by Russia, exercising these plans might be

and occasionally exercises in the field. Some European NATO nations have been reluctant to fully exercise Article 5 responses for fear of offending Russia. However, Russia's Lagoda and Zapad exercises are perceived by some Allies as justification for NATO to do so if all Allies concurred.²³ Another major cause for reluctance is cost and other more critical force constraints; commitments to ISAF, for example, have reduced the availability of resources and forces for such exercises. As ISAF withdrawals take place, these conditions might change, and such exercises could potentially increase.

Such exercises are important to certain CEE Allies. For example, a senior Polish official recently suggested live-fire exercises in Poland for the NATO Response Force (NRF) Article 5 mission.²⁴ As with planning, however, NATO exercises should not be limited to major joint operations but should include ambiguous scenarios where more debate is needed. NATO is currently

deciding how robust its next major exercise, Steadfast Jazz 2013, will be.²⁵

Although creating contingency plans should not be seen as provocative by Russia, exercising these plans might be. Transparency and dialogue in the NATO-Russia Council and its working groups should therefore be an important first step.

There is also concern that even with proper contingency plans and exercises, NATO will not be able to make decisions quickly enough to respond to provocations. These do not primarily concern NSNW, although the nuclear bodies within NATO could benefit from updating and a greater degree of transparency about their planning assumptions and operational arrangements. Two steps can help to reassure these conventional concerns. First, NATO has already created a new strategic assessment capability in its international staff. This capability is intended to provide NATO with early warning of potential incidents. It currently focuses only on new emerging threats; however, members could consider broadening its mandate to include strengthening NATO's readiness for limited conventional conflict (designed in such a way as to ensure that NATO preparations are not aimed at any particular country and cover all possible threats).

Second, NATO should exercise its Article 5 decision-making responsibilities using robust scenarios and simulations with both NATO members and its political leadership. By identifying problem areas of decisionmaking in advance, Allies can gain greater confidence that, if necessary, NATO would respond to provocations in a timely manner. Some of these reassurance goals were pursued in the March preparatory CMX 2011 in Tallinn.²⁶

Strengthening Conventional Forces and the Article 5 Mission. NATO needs to strengthen its conventional forces to fully support the Article 5 mission. The economic recession and reduced sense of threat have led most NATO nations to reduce their defense budgets significantly. Despite perceived and publicly stated concerns regarding Russia and the need for further reassurance, only a handful of European nations

now spend more than 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense, and manpower levels have decreased significantly and seemingly will continue to do so after withdrawals from Afghanistan.²⁷ The U.S. contribution to overall NATO defense spending has risen, since a decade ago, from about half the total budget to nearly three-quarters today.

Most of these European national reductions have been taken unilaterally without much consultation with the Alliance. The effect of these reductions on NATO's overall capabilities is uncertain, and within NATO, there is little will to take on nations that are cutting too deeply in critical areas because all are cutting deeply. In addition, operations in Libya demonstrated that without the United States, European nations have critical materiel and significant operational shortfalls, including communication gaps, low stocks of precision munitions, and difficulty in providing enabling equipment, such as refueling aircraft. These factors led former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to declare that unless these trends are reversed, NATO's future is "dim if not dismal."²⁸

The United States initially announced in 2011 that it would retain three Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) in Europe after 2015.²⁹ Further U.S. budget pressure will likely reduce the total U.S. ground forces in Europe below that number. The remaining BCTs will be complemented by missile defenses on land (Poland and Romania) and Aegis ships at sea, forward-stationed special operations aircraft, and a long-duration small aviation detachment in Poland.

Recognizing the need to reassure the CEE Allies in particular, NATO members agreed at the 2010 Lisbon Summit to a Lisbon Critical Capabilities Commitment that included several capabilities related to Article 5 missions. NATO members also agreed to a new Command Structure Reform designed to make senior commands more deployable, including to the eastern part of the Alliance.

Overall, the relatively uncoordinated European defense cuts, including substantial cuts by CEE countries, and projected American manpower reductions could negatively affect reassurance of Allies. This could be offset

somewhat, however, by what NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen has called "smart defense."³⁰ This would include an array of measures to spend remaining defense euros and dollars wisely. Examples of smart defense might include establishing regional multinational forces, sharing regional equipment and facilities, pooling funds for enablers such as the C-17 consortium, creating niche capabilities and division of labor, fencing funding for top priority missions, ensuring that rapid

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reaction capabilities such as the NRF are automatically reconstituted for Article 5 missions, earmarking at least one U.S. BCT for the Article 5 mission and having it exercise with the NRF, and considering new roles for conventional prompt strike and other U.S.-based capabilities for defense in Europe. A well-constructed smart defense policy that is accepted by the NATO Chicago Summit in 2012 could have a sound reassuring effect for all Allies.

Enhancing Support for Training and Installations. CEE Allies have consistently called for a higher level of permanent NATO involvement in their region. The U.S. decision to locate some missile defense deployments in Poland and Romania, forward-deployed special operations aircraft, and a longer term aviation detachment (for training purposes and to assist with rotational F-16 deployments) in Poland provides a measure of reassurance.³¹ A permanent U.S. Patriot missile deployment in Poland is now considered unnecessary. But there are limits to how far NATO can go with forward deployment of forces because NATO promises made in the context of the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997

constrain both nuclear deployments and permanently stationing any “significant combat” forces on former Warsaw Pact territories.³²

Several additional steps have been suggested, particularly by leaders in the Baltic states. These include extending and making the NATO Baltic air policing role permanent, using a second Baltic airfield for those air policing operations, restoring NATO Security Investment

CEE Allies have consistently called for a higher level of permanent NATO involvement in their region

Program funding for military installations, making the NATO Center of Cyber Excellence in Estonia more of a regional command headquarters, creating new NATO transport and logistics centers, and enhancing port facilities for military use.³³ Some of these suggestions are under consideration and all are intended to pull NATO installations and NATO “boots on the ground” in their direction in order to maximize their tripwire effect.

Few non-CEE allied states have taken these suggestions, and some leaders have indicated their opposition in private.³⁴ Several suggestions, such as expanding NATO infrastructure, will be expensive, especially in an era of declining defense budgets. There is also some risk involved in implementing all of these suggestions. Russian political and military leaders have consistently expressed particular concern about NATO moving installations nearer to its borders (either because they are concerned over NATO military capabilities close to Russia, or they simply want an unfettered ability to pressure their neighbors if required). Therefore, each of these suggestions will need to be weighed carefully based on cost and political effect. The NATO-Russia Council might serve as a forum in which to discuss these measures.

Broadening Deterrence to Meet New Challenges.

Strengthening reassurance and creating the conditions for further NSNW reductions may also require NATO

responses to three new challenges: missile attacks from the Middle East, cyber attacks from multiple sources, and interruption of energy flows. Some progress has been made on all three.

Missile defense. The missile threat from Iran continues, and efforts to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon may fail. At the Lisbon Summit, NATO agreed to embrace the Obama administration’s European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA), which relies on sea-based Aegis deployments and upgraded land-based Standard Missiles (SM-3s). The United States will finance the Aegis and SM-3 interceptors, other nations are expected to finance their own interceptors, and NATO will fund the common command and control system. Radars will be deployed and their data fused to provide common and timely warning. Deployments are already under way, and this step has provided some reassurance for Allies. The decision was negotiated carefully with Turkey; however, many decisions remain and discussions continue within NATO.

The United States and NATO are now discussing missile defense cooperation with Russia. Russia has sought a single, interoperable system, whereas the United States and NATO have insisted on two separate systems. Russia has asserted the need for mutual treaty limits on missile defense numbers, location, interceptor velocity, and deployments. Initially, Russia proposed both system integration and a “sectoral approach” that would have given Russia responsibility for the defense of some NATO territory close to its borders. The Alliance has firmly rejected the sectoral approach, and it appears that Russia has abandoned this proposal as well. The United States has proposed a center or centers to fuse launch and other data to build a common operating picture in order to allow for common training in operations and other cooperative arrangements to give Russia a greater sense of comfort without necessitating a common system.³⁵ The future of missile defense cooperation will be a major determining factor in Russia’s willingness to consider further NSNW reductions.

Despite NATO’s decision to deploy EPAA, there is the possibility that in the future NATO members may need

to decide on whether additional steps are necessary to deter Iran from using nuclear-tipped missiles against NATO.

Cyber attacks. Other measures can be taken to reassure Allies regarding cyber attacks. NATO has already created a cyber response center and a center of excellence in Tallinn, but so far NATO's mandate for cyber security is focused primarily on defending its own network and infrastructure. The recent Strategic Concept has sought to broaden the Alliance mandate to "prevent, detect, defend against and recover from cyber attacks."³⁶ NATO is currently debating its role in supporting national systems that it relies on for operations. Greater efforts should be taken to provide individual NATO nations with cyber security for their defense establishments, to set common standards for critical infrastructure protection, and to coordinate national efforts. NATO cyber awareness and warning could also be better coordinated and integrated, responses to attacks could be better coordinated, and the center of excellence in Tallinn could be strengthened. These activities should take place parallel with activities within the European Union and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. For example, USEUCOM could provide a cyber range to the Alliance to test various defensive arrangements.

Energy security. Another area where greater reassurance can be achieved is energy security. The new Strategic Concept calls for greater protection of critical energy infrastructure and transit areas. It also calls for greater consultation and contingency planning among Allies. The concept does not directly address the question of a united NATO response to the use of energy cutoffs to intimidate or pressure individual Allies.³⁷ The new future promised by the shale gas sources discovered in northern Europe is yet to be explored, as are the implications of energy dependency and increased market demand competition implicit in Germany's decision to halt exploitation of nuclear power and to accept continued dependence on external gas and oil supplies. There does not appear, however, to be any active proposals for multilateral responses or guarantees; arrangements with

Russia and other suppliers are almost entirely bilateral and market driven.

Broadening deterrence to these three categories of new challenges will provide a considerable degree of comfort to all Allies. Implementing the Lisbon missile defense decision and reaching agreement with Russia on missile defense cooperation is perhaps most important.

Maximizing Deterrent Capabilities of Remaining U.S. NSNW. The conditions for further NSNW mutual reductions could be made more palatable if the nuclear systems that do remain maximize their credibility for deterrence.³⁸ The current NSNW posture in Europe suffers from several deficiencies, not least that the B-61 gravity bombs and DCA to deliver them are aging.

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Readiness level. Under current NATO nuclear policies and procedures, the overall readiness of the force is measured in months.³⁹ This is due to NATO's assessment of the current strategic environment. If the strategic situation deteriorates and Alliance members were prepared to undertake the necessary measures, this readiness level could be dramatically improved.

Weapons security. Some have raised issues about NSNW security (for example, the break-ins by protesters at the Kleine Brogel site in Belgium).⁴⁰ Continued improvements will be needed to maintain a safe, secure, and effective system. The 2008 U.S. Air Force Blue Ribbon Review of Nuclear Weapons Policies and Procedures concluded that "several European nuclear storage sites require additional resources to meet security standards," including support buildings, fences, lighting, and security systems.⁴¹ These shortfalls do not necessarily pose an imminent threat of loss to a

terrorist group, but NATO urgently needs to address these problems.

Weapon-life extension. Another set of improvements relates to the remaining B-61 gravity bombs deployed in Europe. A life-extension program is now funded and under way. This issue can be managed by the United States alone and is on track, although in spring 2011, there seemed to be congressional opposition.⁴² Officials and nongovernmental experts in certain European countries have also requested a broader review about the longer run utility of these bombs.

Dual-capable aircraft. Perhaps the most difficult question relates to the DCA owned by European Allies. U.S. F-15s and F-16s are dual capable as will be the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF). But the F-15 and F-16s are aging and only a few European nations have firm plans to buy the JSF (at this time, it is questionable whether either Belgium or the Netherlands would fund the JSF in a nuclear role). Germany has opted for the Eurofighter, which would require modifications to become dual capable and may raise issues associated with sharing design information

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with the United States. Moreover, Germany's recent decision to opt out of civil nuclear power raises the question of whether, politically, Germany could approve a new military nuclear program. Germany's aging Tornado fleet will be downsized significantly, but with life-extension programs, enough Tornados could be available to perform the DCA role for at least another decade.⁴³

Alternative delivery systems. NATO has conducted a detailed study of eight alternative delivery systems and eliminated most as either too costly or politically im-

practical. One option that deserves more consideration is creating a NATO nuclear air wing, which could be consistent with the pooling and sharing arrangements that the Alliance is promoting as part of its smart defense initiative. Many European nations, however, may view this option as agreeing to pursue a new NATO nuclear program, and therefore upgrading the existing DCAs appears the most likely outcome. For those not purchasing the JSF, life-extension programs are a possible short-term solution, whereas adapting the Eurofighter to characteristics of the reconstituted B-61 may be a longer term solution.

Deployment options. Various deployment options are under consideration by defense analysts, including a "crisis-reconstitution" DCA posture and consolidation of sites from five to two or three. Both of these options carry risk. Under the first option, U.S. nuclear weapons would be withdrawn from Europe and, in accordance with continuing consultations and continuous planning among the Allies, reintroduced into agreed sites in time of need. According to this reconstitution proposal, measures such as information-sharing, nuclear consultations, common planning, and common execution might provide deterrence without a U.S. nuclear presence in Europe in the interim.⁴⁴ Nuclear-sharing has merits, but the fundamental challenge is that the reconstitution of nuclear weapons might not be approved if they are needed, either by European host nations or by the United States itself. More importantly, some argue that reintroducing nuclear weapons into a theater in time of crisis might be destabilizing for crisis management. In addition, certain officials have argued that implementing this option in East Asia has reduced the degree of reassurance among U.S. Allies in that region.⁴⁵

The second option—consolidating sites—runs the risk of creating a slippery slope. If these weapons are consolidated and in the process removed from Germany, at least two other countries would follow. The last two would thus be under intense political pressure to remove the weapons as well, and are not uniformly supported for

this role by the Allies.⁴⁶ If a consolidation agreement is part of an overall arms control approach with Russia, this slippery slope might be mitigated.

Command and control. Additional modifications need to be made to command and control capabilities and readiness. NATO's nuclear command and control need a reliable and resilient "dual" system that avoids "single point of failure" breakdowns. Such a system is available at limited cost. And the readiness of today's deployment is in need of dramatic improvement.

Declaratory policy. Finally, both NATO nuclear guidance and its declaratory policy could be updated to give them more credibility and palatability. NATO's current nuclear guidance dates back to the 1990s. Although the United States is not ready to declare that the sole purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter nuclear attack, the declaratory policy in the Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) is close to that position, leaving a narrow range of other purposes related primarily to other WMD attacks conducted by states not in compliance with, or party to, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Adopting the NPR language as NATO declaratory policy could also make remaining deployments more palatable to European public opinion, although France reportedly has continued to resist any change in NATO declaratory policy, even after the 2010 Strategic Concept.

If NATO's strategy is to negotiate with Russia for parallel efforts at transparency, removing NSNW from the NATO-Russia border areas, and some mutual reductions, then the NSNW that remain—no matter for how long, or under what deployment or operational configuration—will need to be safe, secure, effective, and credible. Steps have been taken and more are needed to create these conditions.

Modifying Russian Deployments and Doctrine. The Alliance's new Strategic Concept focused on Russian deployments and doctrine stating that "in any future reductions, our aim should be to seek Russian agreement to increase transparency of its nuclear weapons in Europe and relocate these weapons away from the territory of NATO's members." If this policy is to be

sustained, it is hard to envision future NATO nuclear reductions without parallel and reciprocal Russian actions relating to transparency, location, and numbers of NSNW. The question is how to engage with Russia on NSNW.

The United States has suggested the possibility of a new global follow-on to the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) with comprehensive warhead ceilings, and has also proposed informal transparency measures on NSNW; however, a detailed approach and strategy have yet to be adopted.

NATO nuclear guidance and its declaratory policy could be updated to give them more credibility and palatability

The "Follow-on to New START" is likely to be a bilateral negotiation on a global ceiling for U.S. and Russian deployed and nondeployed strategic and non-strategic warheads, with a common ceiling and possible freedom to mix within that ceiling.⁴⁷ Such a negotiation would be an important step for global stability, but it would take considerable time to negotiate. It would also have significant verification issues to resolve, and it remains to be seen how NSNW would be specifically addressed if there is freedom to mix warheads under a common ceiling.

Further arms control steps either between the United States and Russia or NATO and Russia could include issues of relocation to specified geographical limits (for example, a nondeployment zone on either side of the NATO-Russia border), mutual or reciprocal reductions, and/or consolidating deployment or storage sites. Each has advantages and disadvantages. Relocation to Russia's east would comfort Allies but could create concerns for Japan and China as well as undercut Moscow's hopes for a global intermediate-range nuclear forces ban to parallel the agreement

with the United States.⁴⁸ Reciprocal reductions (for example, 30 percent each) would lead to larger numerical cuts for Russia but would leave NATO with very few remaining U.S. weapons on European soil. Moreover, consolidating Alliance sites could lead to the slippery slope for NATO deployments discussed earlier. Russian leaders also stress the need for more comprehensive negotiations that include conventional weapons, missile defense, and space weapons, all of which would drastically complicate NSNW talks.

interim steps need not be packaged in a traditional arms control treaty format; they could consist of more flexible reciprocal steps

Interim steps need not be packaged in a traditional arms control treaty format; they could consist of more flexible reciprocal steps, building upon the confidence created by previous steps. They might even take the form of paired unilateral initiatives, similar to the U.S. and Russian pledges on shorter range NSNW systems of the early 1990s. A good starting point would be transparency measures. U.S. officials have called for increased NSNW transparency on a reciprocal and parallel basis through data exchanges as a first step, and verification could be added.⁴⁹ Most European Allies appear to support the concept of implementing parallel transparency measures as a step toward further arms control. This has been explored in the recent German-Swedish “Food for Thought” paper, which was signed by 10 Allies,⁵⁰ and also the April 15, 2011, non-paper that was signed by 10 European Permanent Representatives and that suggested a transparency process could take place in the NATO-Russia Council.⁵¹

NATO and Russia, by national decisions, might also exchange information on safety and security of weapons and storage sites, along the

lines of the successful U.S.-Russia exchanges on strategic weapons that began in spring 2011. Officer exchange programs could be established, which focus on nuclear issues. High-level seminars similar to the Vienna Doctrine Seminars of the 1990s could be held on nuclear doctrine and strategy. Exercises could be held to practice responses to nuclear accidents and improve nuclear forensics.

Developing an approach designed to address Russian NSNW would require close consultation with Allies and careful negotiations with Russia. But this approach, along with further reassurance measures discussed above, presents perhaps the most promising path to “create the conditions” for further NSNW reductions.

Conclusions

As NATO members engage in the ongoing DDPR, national deliberations are deepening on the issue of NSNW. All members remain committed to the compromise reached in the new NATO Strategic Concept on the role of nuclear weapons, and most appear willing to discuss NSNW in the context of further reductions and assess the broader effects for Alliance security, solidarity, and global nonproliferation. Most recently, the non-paper signed by 10 member states (including several host countries, “old NATO” members, and CEE countries—Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia) stressed the need for “more systematic dialogue between NATO and Russia” on achieving greater transparency, mutual trust, and confidence relating to NSNW.⁵²

In this context, reassurance of Allies is a core issue, as is NATO’s evolving relationship with Russia. A plan to create the conditions for future NSNW reductions could benefit from all seven reassurance measures discussed in this paper.

The first five measures all have a significant positive effect on reassuring Eastern Allies that the conventional part of the NATO Article 5 commitment remains valid. Moreover, declaratory statements and broadening deterrence to include missile defense also

Summary of Impact of Seven Measures by Hans Binnendijk

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Importance to Conventional Reassurance | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▲ | ▽ | ▽ |
| Importance to Nuclear Reassurance | ■ | ▽ | ▽ | ▽ | ■ | ▲ | ▲ |
| Contributions to Future Nuclear Reductions | ▽ | ▽ | ▽ | ▽ | ■ | ■ | ▲ |
| Negative Impact on U.S.-Russia Relations | ▽ | ▲ | ▽ | ▲ | ■ | ■ | ▽ |

Key

▲ = high impact; ■ = medium impact; ▽ = low impact

Seven Reassurance Measures

1. Building confidence through operational success and declaratory statements
2. Enhancing conventional plans, exercises, and decisionmaking procedures
3. Strengthening conventional forces and the Article 5 mission
4. Enhancing support for training and installations
5. Broadening deterrence to meet new challenges
6. Maximizing deterrent capabilities of remaining U.S. NSNW
7. Modifying Russian deployments and doctrine

have a relatively positive effect on reassurance with regard to nuclear deterrence.

Of these first five measures, enhanced exercises, greater installation support in the Baltic states, and missile defense deployments might have a negative effect on NATO-Russia relations. This could be mitigated, however, through enhanced cooperative efforts and confidence-building measures with Russia.

Steps pertaining to the sixth measure—maximizing the safety, security, effectiveness, and credibility of NSNW—are necessary to retain confidence in NATO's deterrence and defense posture throughout the Alliance.

Finally, the seventh measure—involving approaches to achieve Russian actions relating to transparency, location, and numbers of NSNW—will be central to reassurance of Allies.

Future NATO NSNW reductions and reassurance measures will need to be carefully orchestrated and involve three steps for NATO: focus on balanced steps designed to reassure Allies and limit negative Russian responses; continue to promote improved relations with Russia, including mutual and reciprocal steps relating to NSNW; and ensure NATO's deterrence and defense posture, including nuclear deterrence, remains credible.

Summary of Impact of Seven Measures

The table above summarizes, in an admittedly subjective analysis, the effect that each of the seven sets of measures might have on four different outcomes: conventional reassurance, nuclear reassurance, contributions to future

nuclear reductions, and negative impact on U.S.-Russia relations. Each part of this matrix is rated based on the above analysis. It was provided by Hans Binnendijk.

Notes

¹ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), *Strategic Concept: Active Engagement, Modern Defense* (November 19–20, 2010), 4–5, available at <www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_68580.htm>.

² Interviews conducted in Washington, DC, and Europe from February to May 2011, including the February 2011 Munich Security Conference.

³ The United Kingdom also deployed nonstrategic nuclear weapons (NSNW) that were committed to NATO under United Kingdom control.

⁴ Ian Anthony and Johnny Janssen, *The Future of Nuclear Weapons in NATO* (Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2010), available at <<http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/ipa/07151.pdf>>.

⁵ Interview with the President of the Russian Federation on Channel One TV, in Russian, August 31, 2008, available at <www.kreml.org/interview/190774493>. The second point of the doctrine states, “the world should be multipolar. Unipolarity is unacceptable. Domination is unacceptable. We cannot accept a world order where all decisions are taken by one country, even one as serious and as influential as the United States of America. This world is unstable and threatened by conflict.”

⁶ *The Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation*, February 5, 2010, available at <www.carnegieendowment.org/files/2010russia_militaryDoctrine.pdf>.

⁷ Interviews; see also “Non-paper Submitted by Poland, Norway, Germany, and the Netherlands on Increasing Transparency and Confidence with Regard to Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe,” April 14, 2011, available at <www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/nuclearweapons/nato-nonpaper041411.pdf>.

⁸ See reports from August 2009, including *Army Times*, August 19, 2009.

⁹ For example, see *Sunday Times of London*, August 16, 2008. Also see *The Telegraph*, August 15, 2008. General Anatoly Nogovitsyn was quoted: “By hosting these [U.S. missiles] Poland is making itself a target. This is 100 percent certain. It becomes a target for attack. Such targets are destroyed as a first priority.”

¹⁰ Tom Sauer and Bob van der Zwaan, “U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe after NATO’s Lisbon Summit: Why Their Withdrawal Is Desirable and Feasible,” Discussion Paper 2011–05, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard Kennedy School, May 2011, available at <<http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/us-tactical-nuclearweapons-in-europe.pdf>>. The authors also note one possible reason for Greece’s call for withdrawal as having to do with choosing a new fighter plane without having a nuclear capability.

¹¹ Johan Bergenä s et al., *Reducing and Regulating Tactical (Non-Strategic) Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Moving Forward?* (Monterey, CA: The James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, April 2010), available at <http://cns.miis.edu/opapers/pdfs/reducing_tnw_april_2010.pdf>. See also Alex Valeriyovich Fenenko, “After the Reset: Progression of Russian-US Relations in 2010,” January 17, 2011, available at <www.ng.ru/courier/2011-01-17/9_reload.html>.

¹² An interview with an official from one of the countries involved stated that its participation was an effort to move Westerwelle away from a unilateralist position.

¹³ Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre (Speech, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Berlin, June 22, 2010).

¹⁴ NATO, *Strategic Concept*, 7–8.

¹⁵ The April 15, 2011, non-paper to Secretary-General Rasmussen was signed by representatives from Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, and Slovenia. It stated: “The inclusion of NATO’s tactical nuclear weapons in any arms control process should be subject to consultations within the alliance. The process should furthermore be based on the principle of indivisibility of security within the alliance and on the assumption of reciprocity between NATO and the Russian Federation.”

¹⁶ See chapter 1 of Simon Lunn, “NATO Nuclear Policy: Reflections on Lisbon and Looking Ahead to the DDPR.”

¹⁷ *NATO 2020: Assured Security; Dynamic Engagement* (Brussels: NATO, May 2010), available at <www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_63654.htm>.

¹⁸ Ibid., 11.

¹⁹ NATO, *Strategic Concept*, 4–5.

²⁰ Ibid., 4.

²¹ Ibid., 7.

²² Baltic Reports, January 16, 2010, and private interviews with NATO officials.

²³ NATO also has had exercises involving NSNW in response to attack; perhaps the best known, the Able Archer exercise, was conducted in November 1983.

²⁴ Interview with defense official in Washington, DC, at National Defense University, 2010.

²⁵ See <<https://transnet.act.nato.int/WISE/NATOACTRes/CY2011NATO/STEADFASTJ4>>.

²⁶ See <www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_71062.htm>.

²⁷ See spring 2011 speeches by NATO Secretary-General Rasmussen. See also Lawrence F. Kaplan, “Open Wide: How Libya Revealed the Huge Gap between U.S. and European Military Might,” *The New Republic*, April 26, 2011, available at <www.tnr.com/article/crossings/87377/libya-nato-military-power-europe-us>.

²⁸ Robert M. Gates, “The Security and Defense Agenda (Future of NATO),” Brussels, June 10, 2011, available at <www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1581>. During this speech, he also declared, “I’ve worried openly about NATO turning into a two-tiered alliance: Between members who specialize in ‘soft’ humanitarian, development, peacekeeping, and talking tasks, and those conducting the ‘hard’ combat missions.”

²⁹ NATO Source (Alliance News blog), January 11, 2011, available at <www.acus.org/natosource>.

³⁰ “NATO Secretary General Calls for ‘Smart Defense’ at Munich Conference,” February 4, 2011, available at <www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_70327.htm?selectedLocale=en>.

³¹ See also Marcin Sobczyk and Carol E. Lee, “Obama to Announce Permanent Stationing of U.S. Air Force Detachment in Poland,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 28, 2011, available at <[www.blogs.wsj.com/emergingeurope/2011/05/28/obama-to-announce-permanent-stationing-of-u-s-air-force-detachment-in-poland/](http://blogs.wsj.com/emergingeurope/2011/05/28/obama-to-announce-permanent-stationing-of-u-s-air-force-detachment-in-poland/)>.

³² For the details and conditions of these promises, see James M. Goldgeier, *Not Whether But When* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1999), chapter V. In 2010, Russia claimed multiple infractions. See Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, *The Facts of Violation by the United States of its Obligations in the Sphere of Nonproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Arms Control* (Moscow: Information and Press Department, August 7, 2010). The 1997 statement states: “NATO reiterates that in the current and foreseeable security environment, the Alliance will carry out its collective defense and other missions by ensuring

the necessary interoperability, integration, and capability for reinforcement rather than by additional permanent stationing of substantial combat forces. The member States of NATO reiterate that they have no intention, no plan and no reason to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of new members, nor any need to change any aspect of NATO's nuclear posture or nuclear policy—and do not foresee any future need to do so." This also parallels the promise made in the German unification treaties that no nuclear deployments will ever be made on former East German territory.

³³ Based on interviews in Washington, DC, with senior Baltic officials.

³⁴ Based on interviews in Brussels, April and May 2011.

³⁵ See NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, speech at the RUSI Missile Defense Conference, London, June 15, 2011, available at <www.rusi.org/events/ref:E4CF77C90E3362/info:public/infoid:E4DF8CB5F15F42>. In the speech, the Secretary-General stated, "We could envisage setting up a joint centre where we could look at the ballistic missile threat together, share early warning data, exchange information and share assessments. We could also envisage setting up a joint centre where we could coordinate our responses."

³⁶ NATO, *Strategic Concept*, 16–17.

³⁷ Ibid., 17.

³⁸ See Secretary of Defense Task Force on DoD Nuclear Weapons Management, *Report of the Secretary of Defense Task Force on DoD Nuclear Weapons Management—Phase II: Review of the DoD Nuclear Mission* (Arlington, VA: n.p., December 2008), 1417 (otherwise known as the Schlesinger Report).

³⁹ NATO, "NATO's Nuclear Forces in the New Security Environment," January 24, 2008, accessed at <www.nato.int/issues/nuclear/sec-environment.html>. "In 2002, in a second step, the readiness requirements for these aircraft were further reduced and are now being measured in months."

⁴⁰ Robert S. Norris and Hans M. Kristensen, "U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe, 2011," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 67, no. 1 (December 2010), 64–73. See also Hans M. Kristensen, "U.S. Nuclear Weapons Site in Europe Breached," February 4, 2010, available at <www.fas.org/blog/ssp/2010/02/kleinebrogel.php>.

⁴¹ U.S. Air Force, 2008 USAF *Blue Ribbon Review of Nuclear Weapons Policies and Procedures*, February 12, 2008, available at <[www.airforce-magazine.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/TheDocumentFile/Current%20Operations/BRR020808ExecSummary.pdf](http://airforce-magazine.com/SiteCollectionDocuments/TheDocumentFile/Current%20Operations/BRR020808ExecSummary.pdf)>. See also "Panel Urges Air Force to Unify Nuclear Command," *The New York Times*, September 12, 2008, available at <www.nytimes.com/2008/09/13/washington/13military.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>.

⁴² Tom Z. Collina, "Pentagon to Revise Nuclear Guidance," *Arms Control Today*, June 2011, available at <www.armscontrol.org/act/2011_06/NuclearGuidance>.

⁴³ Based on interviews with European analysts.

⁴⁴ Karl Heinz Kamp, *NATO's Nuclear Posture Review: Nuclear Sharing Instead of Nuclear Stationing*, Research Paper no. 68 (Rome: NATO Defense College, May 30, 2011).

⁴⁵ Meetings with Korean and Japanese officials in recent months revealed concern about U.S. defense commitments in the face of Chinese assertiveness. See Michito Tsuruoka, The German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the United States Policy Brief, *Why the NATO Nuclear Debate Is Relevant to Japan and Vice Versa* (Washington, DC: GMF, October 8, 2010), in which he argues that a Nuclear Planning Group approach would strengthen extended deterrence for Japan.

⁴⁶ Interviews in Brussels, May 2011.

⁴⁷ See National Security Council (NSC) Senior Director Gary Samore, speech, Czech Republic, April 12, 2011, 4.

⁴⁸ Russia and the United States issued a statement in 2007 reaffirming their support for the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and calling upon other governments to renounce and eliminate their ground-launched missiles with ranges banned by the treaty. The statement declared U.S. and Russian intentions to "work with all interested countries" and "discuss the possibility of imparting a global character to this important regime." This may be a harder case to make, in particular to China, if Russian nonstrategic nuclear forces are moved closer to China's borders.

⁴⁹ On March 29, 2011, NSC Advisor Thomas Donilon spoke at the Carnegie Endowment stating, "In advance of a new treaty limiting tactical nuclear weapons, we also plan to consult with our Allies on reciprocal actions . . . as a first step, we would like to increase transparency on a reciprocal basis concerning the numbers, locations and types of nonstrategic forces in Europe."

⁵⁰ Background paper for Foreign Affairs Council, Defense Ministers, and Development Ministers, Brussels, December 8, 2010. The paper advocated "enhanced cooperation, with a view to spending resources in Europe more efficiently and to maintain a broad array of military capabilities to ensure national objectives as well as Europe's ability act credibly in crises."

⁵¹ See "Non-paper," proposals 1, 2.

⁵² Ibid.

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